

# The Morningstar

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF

**EPIPHANY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**

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Dear Vigilant Saints,

**T**he season of Advent intentionally connects the increasing physical darkness of winter with human mortality and the irreversible march of time toward the inevitable “darkness of death” (Isaiah 9:2). I was suddenly jolted by the prospect when informed, in mid-November that my ninety-two-year-old mother, Ruth, had been admitted to hospital after a fainting spell. Now I ponder the possibility that my next visit with her may be my last. But, because of the advent of the Christ Child, I believe that the sweet sorrow of our final parting will *not* be our last! As an old German proverb promises: “Those who live in the Lord never see each other for the last time.”

While my family and I hope and pray for Mom’s recovery, we find comfort in remembering her lifelong faith, often expressed in her readiness to depart and be with the Lord. Her life of steadfast devotion to family, church and community testifies to Advent’s vision of God’s promised future, when the mortal humanity we have been blessed to share with beloved companions in our own unique households of family, church and community, will take full and final form “when the one who *left* us here” – namely, our Lord Jesus Christ – “*returns* for us, *at last!*”\*, in the advent of his second coming! For *this* we are called to watch and wait, prepare and pray in this holy season.

The promise of Advent is rooted in the divine humanity of Jesus Christ, whose birth shines the everlasting light of God’s infinite love in the falling dark night of the soul; whose crucifixion reconciles “the hopes and fears of all the years”, and whose resurrection rekindles the eternal flame of the world’s true light, which no darkness – not even the deepest darkness of death – can comprehend, overcome nor ever extinguish (John 1:5)!

Veni Emmanuel! Come, Lord Jesus!

*Peace be with you all,  
Pastor Peter*

(\*this is one of my all-time favourite lines, from one of my all-time favourite songs of the 1960s Woodstock generation, “Get Together”, by the Youngbloods)



# DECEMBER CALENDAR

## SUNDAY DECEMBER 7

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT (BLUE)  
12 noon Holy Communion Service  
Pastor Peter Lisinski (In-person & Zoom)

## THURSDAY DECEMBER 11

7:00 p.m. Council Meeting

## FRIDAY DECEMBER 12

10:00-11:15 a.m. Bible Class (GoogleMeet)

## SUNDAY DECEMBER 14

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT (BLUE)  
12 noon Service of the Word  
Pastor Peter Lisinski (In-person & Zoom)

## SUNDAY DECEMBER 21

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT (BLUE)  
12 noon Service of the Word  
Pastor Peter Lisinski (In-person & Zoom)  
Followed by Tree Decorating

## WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 24

CHRISTMAS EVE (WHITE)  
4 pm Christmas Eve Service  
Pastor Peter Lisinski (In-person & Zoom)

## SUNDAY DECEMBER 28

1 CHRISTMAS (WHITE)  
12 noon Service of the Word  
Pastor Peter Lisinski (In-person & Zoom)

### Zoom Link to EPIPHANY LUTHERAN

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9890800583?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9890800583?pwd=R05md05jWjZBTnNwc202SWJpSG5kZz09)  
[pwd=R05md05jWjZBTnNwc202SWJpSG5kZz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9890800583?pwd=R05md05jWjZBTnNwc202SWJpSG5kZz09)

Or by phone following the prompts:

+1 647 374 4685 Canada  
Meeting ID: 989 080 0583  
Passcode: 095565

Heartfelt thanks to Dorothea Cameron for decorating the church entrance and gardens so beautifully throughout the seasons for nearly a decade. Dorothea would like to pass her gardening design gloves on and give someone else the chance to add their own green thumb.

## "A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH"

(TEXT: JOB 19:23-27; LUKE 20:27-38)

**Falling leaves and barren trees,** drab and dreary skies, landscape of winter snow: creation itself echoes the terminal mortality of human life raised in today's scripture readings. Like the changing of the seasons, the march of time moves us all ever forward to the dead-end of our earthly journey. Most of us have kept vigil at the bedside of a dying loved one – some of us quite recently; others of us may find ourselves there in the never far-off future. Hidden within the precious gift of being alive – sun in the morning, stars at night, solid ground beneath our feet, dreams of a white Christmas – looms the prospect of having to die!

The story of Job, the oldest piece of literature in the entire Bible, traces the full range of our mortal soul's journey from cradle to grave; and concludes that God himself is in some way responsible for humanity's pain, suffering and death. But in all his earthly sojourn from triumph to tragedy, in sickness and in health, Job maintained his personal integrity and human dignity. In today's First Lesson – made famous by the glorious music of Handel's *Messiah* – Job proclaims his unshakeable faith in God's salvation, some 1500 hundred years before Jesus' death and resurrection: "I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth; and [when I return to dust], yet in my flesh I shall see God."

In today's Gospel, doubt about Job's steadfast faith is raised by a skeptical group of Jesus' adversaries known as Sadducees. They represented the top one percent of the Jewish population among whom the High Priests of the Jerusalem temple were traditionally appointed. The Sadducees had little use for the story of Job; they regarded only the five books of Moses as authentic and authoritative scripture, and in those writings they could find no justification for Job's faith, and Jesus' promise of resurrection. They challenged Jesus in light of a passage from Deuteronomy 25[:5-6]: "If a man dies childless, his brother must marry his widow, and their firstborn son shall take the deceased brother's name, so that it will not be forgotten in Israel."

The ancient law of levirate marriage testifies to the importance of preserving tradition, heritage, and memory to inspire faith and hope in the fulfillment of our common destiny toward which God calls all human beings to aspire. And by framing his defense of the belief in resurrection within that part of the Bible the Sadducees revered most highly, Jesus helped them envision its promise in a way they could understand. He reminded them that at the burning bush God had commissioned Moses to liberate God's oppressed children – and, therefore, God's *chosen* people – by revealing his sacred name: not "I was", but "I am" the God of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob, Leah and Rachel: "He is God not of the dead, but of the living" says Jesus; "For to God all of them are alive!" Both, those who have died in the past, and we who live in the present, as well as those yet unborn, have been incorporated into God's eternal life and promised future by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ – signified in the Hebrew covenant by the rite of circumcision, and in the Christian covenant by the sacrament of Holy Baptism.

Job came to understand that the inevitable truth of human mortality is deeply hidden in the unfathomable mystery of God's divine substance, infinite holiness and eternal nature. And the crucifixion, death and burial of Jesus Christ does indeed affirm that even *if* God is *not* the *source* and *cause* – and that's a *big* if! – God *does* hold himself *ultimately* accountable, and has paid the *heaviest* sacrifice to redeem his children from the sin, evil and death that have plagued, and *continue* to plague God's *good* creation, and those who are created in God's image. But Jesus' resurrection from death and the grave, proclaims that someday, somehow, somewhere, our mortal humanity will be clothed in divine immortality; we will be called out of the darkness of death into the holy communion of God's saints; we will greet long lost loved ones; we will meet new found loved ones; all gathered for the remembrance of Jesus Christ, and for the marriage feast of God's only-begotten Son; who will offer the first toast to our risen life; then invite us to eat and drink ... together ... *with God!*

Pastor Peter Lisinski



## Epiphany's Fall 2025 Property Cleanup

Thanks to God and Mother Nature, we had a break in a rainy week after the season's first snowfall, so leaf raking at the church Saturday morning on November 15 was on! By noon, 50 packed bags were at the curb (half last year's number, but then so were the available volunteers). By afternoon, it was raining again with more leaves still in the trees not quite ready to let go.

Special thanks and shout-outs to Peter Herrmann, who came several times before the day to mulch and bag, and to Debby Hrazdira and Armin Sommer, who each made the trip from Whitby armed with leaf-blowers and energy. Thanks to all the great helpers and to Sigrid Engler for providing lunch and hot coffee on behalf of ELW.



**We hear** *the beating of wings over Bethlehem and a light that is not of the sun or of the stars shines in the midnight sky. Let the beauty of the story take away all narrowness, all thought of formal creeds.*

*Let it be remembered as a story that has happened again and again, to men of many different races, that has been expressed through many religions, that has been called by many different names. Time and space and language lay no limitations upon human brotherhood.*

— New York Times, 25 December 1937, quoted in *Quotations for Special Occasions* by Maud van Buren, 1938, published by The H.W. Wilson Company, New York

**N**ot to take anything away from the rest of us but first of all, I have to give kudos to Greg for last month's excellent Devotion. It looked like you were winging it, which made it more awesome. I'm also cognizant that Pastor Peter is a wordsmith extraordinaire so I do feel surrounded by greatness. Today I will be brief, and take us down a path less travelled to reveal a couple of incidents from my own life that made a lasting impression on me.

When I was a young child I had a friend "Bucky" who lived on Howard Street, over a set of stores. His windows were access to an overhang that we delighted in climbing out onto and watch the world go by on Howard Street. We were best friends. He had this ring that he gave me and it had an inscription around the inside that said "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Now at that time, I didn't know that this instruction was actually the Golden Rule of Jesus which can be found not only in the Gospels of Matthew (7:12) but also Luke (6:31). That saying struck a chord with me and I loved that it was so neatly inscribed on the ring. Well, the next day, Bucky demanded the ring back. I was truly shocked and felt betrayed but returned it to him and our friendship ended there. That saying stayed with me ever since and furnished me a certain degree of guidance and balance. It was years later when I realized that God never wanted me to keep that ring, it was the message he wanted to plant in my little 10 year old brain. I felt that it was a simple saying that was close to my heart and didn't know that this was an ethical principle that advocated for treating others with active kindness, compassion, and love. It's too bad that more of the world doesn't take such wisdom to heart.

Did you ever get yourself into a situation that felt impossible to accomplish but somehow you managed to make it through? In the 90s I was convinced by a friend that since I was quite proficient in my work with Prepress that I should teach it, at least part time. Energized with this new idea, I thought why not shoot for the moon and apply at the University of Toronto. Such a long shot, what are the chances? Well, I almost had a heart attack when I was accepted over 200 other applicants. Their current teacher had some sort of emotional breakdown and they needed someone tout suite. I was told to start in two weeks with my course materials.

Oops! I figured I would teach whatever was already prepared but was told no, I had to assemble my own original course and since I had nothing, they agreed that I would write one class at a time and get their approval before teaching it. They also said that there were several cameras inside the classrooms long before it became fashionable. Now the heat was on.

Ok, two weeks. I thought it impossible. As well, I have a morbid fear of speaking to groups (like now!). I figure now I've gone and done it, got myself in deep. Those college kids are sharp and they are going to eat me alive.

My first day, I arrived two hours early and sat in my car to go over the material I had prepared while grappling with the fact that only 10% of my material is written, 90% in the noggin, also that sequence and pacing is key. I sat there pondering the birth of this new phobia, hoping for some chance meteor strike or lightening bolt to take my dilemma away. I needed to talk engagingly for the next 3 hours and the written notes were only brief takeaways.

Talk about head spinning ... and then I remembered (Joshua 1:9), "Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." Realizing that I was not going in alone, a certain calm came over me with the renewed understanding that this time I held all the cards and was equipped with all the answers. It turns out the students loved me and UofT phoned me for two years after I had finished teaching, asking me to come back.

For as long as I can remember, Jesus has provided me with bits of wisdom and direction in His own way, sometimes presented in trivial and imperceptible occurrences. Only after do I connect the dots and realize that I've navigated a path practically by breadcrumbs. Some may say this is God acting in "mysterious ways." I say it's great having a friend in the highest of places.

**Gord Munro**

# Being “Friends of Creation” at Christmas: Restoring Hope

*If you oppress poor [or needy] people, you insult the God who made them; but kindness shown to the poor [and needy] is an act of worship. — Proverbs 14:31*

We have a responsibility to care for God’s creation, from own backyard to across the globe, but how does one make a difference?

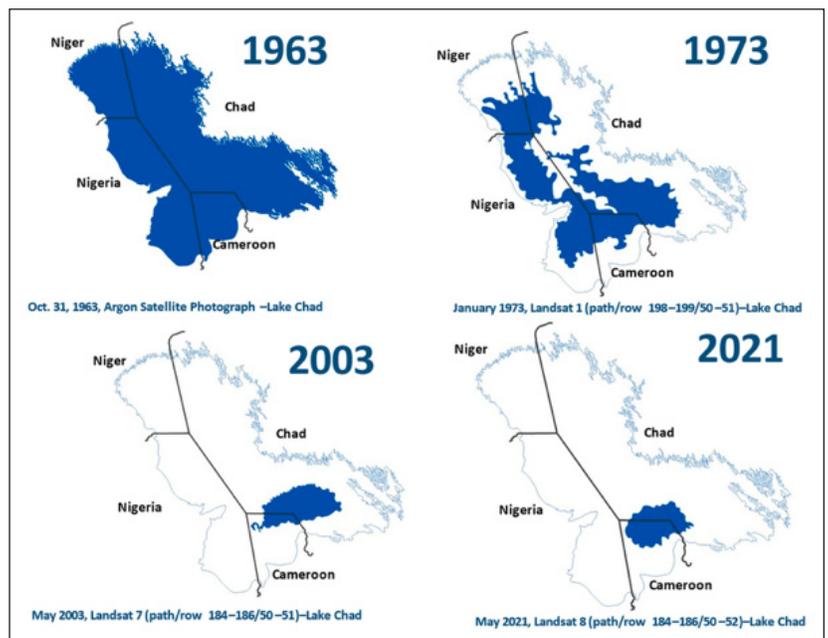
The CLWR\* initiative called *Nature-Based Solutions* is a dynamic and challenging approach to a simple premise: **if we take care of creation, it can take care of us.**

Working alongside thousands of local farmers, the *Nature-Based Solutions* project is working to restore the Lake Chad ecosystem in central Africa and move toward sustainability by:

- healing farmland with regenerative agriculture
- reforesting the land with agroforestry
- catching and managing water before it disappears
- supporting women, families, and food security

The Lake Chad catchment area is the largest inland water basin in Africa, yet the lake has shrunk by 90% since 1963. Lake Chad continues to shrink due to local human activity like deforestation, overgrazing, pollution, and unsustainable water use, combined with global climate effects: shorter rainy seasons and temperatures predicted to increase 1.5 times faster here than the global average.

You are invited to help restore hope for this sensitive ecosystem by being a “friend of creation.” Please note that each monetary gift is matched by the Government of Canada, to double your impact. Every donation will make a difference: \$12.50 will restore a quarter of an acre, \$50.00 will restore a whole acre.



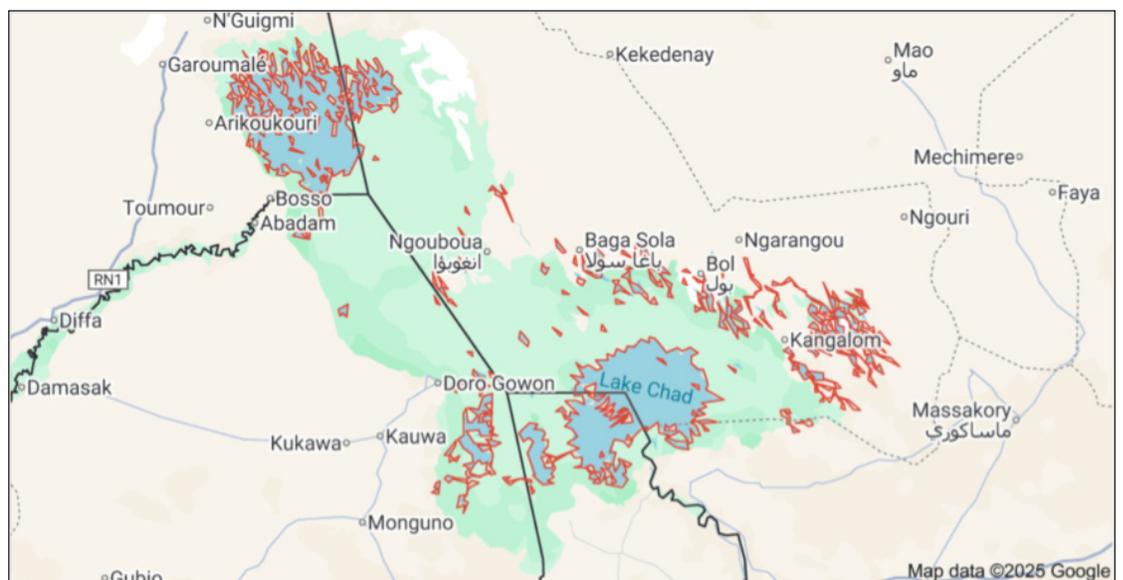
You can make your gift at [www.clwr.org/foc](http://www.clwr.org/foc), or by calling **1-800-661-2597** toll-free.

Thank you for your consideration of our “neighbours” in Africa, almost 10,000 kilometres away!

Wishing you every good blessing this Christmas.

**Denise Dennis,**  
**Stewardship**

\*together with the Lutheran World Federation and with support from Global Affairs Canada



## CHURCH COUNCIL

Council Chair:	Geoff Crewe
Council Vice-Chair:	Denise Dennis
Council Secretary:	Frank Dietz
Councillor-at-Large:	Greg Furan
Councillor-at-Large:	Gord Munro
Councillor:	Frank Dietz
Councillor:	Sigrid Engler
Treasurer:	Nalini Badley

## COMMITTEE LIAISONS

Education:	Open
Finance:	Geoff Crewe
Property:	Geoff Crewe
Stewardship:	Denise Dennis
Visioning:	Gordon Vollmer
AMMS Liaison:	Geoff Crewe
Worship & Music:	Marg Crewe
Morningstar:	Sigi Sommer
Seniors Group:	Ute Wentzel
Advertising Coordinator:	Nalini Badley
ELW:	Sigrid Engler
Envelope Secretary:	Sigrid Engler
Mutual Ministry:	Open
Spiritual Society Liaison:	Open

## TREASURER'S REPORT

OCTOBER 2025	RECEIVED	SPENT	SURPLUS(DEFICIT)
OFFERINGS	\$2,645.00		
AMMS PARSONAGE RENT	2,575.00		
AMMS FELLOWSHIP HALL RENT	1,500.00		
AMMS PARSONAGE UTILITIES	233.13		
AMMS PROPERTY TAX	1,252.00		
GST/PST RECEIVABLE	104.78		
<b>CURRENT MONTH TOTALS</b>	<b>\$8,309.91</b>	<b>\$7,746.59</b>	<b>\$563.32</b>
<b>YEAR TO DATE TOTALS</b>	<b>\$94,756.47</b>	<b>\$85,267.83</b>	<b>\$9,488.64</b>
CIBC BANK BALANCE AT OCTOBER 31, 2025			23,792.79
CIBC INVESTOR'S EDGE ACCOUNT BALANCE AT THE END OF OCTOBER			205,632.59
SCOTIA BANK NON REDEEMABLE GIC AT 3.04% MATURING OCTOBER 26, 2026			30,000.00
CIBC NON REDEEMABLE GIC AT 2.80% MATURING OCTOBER 19, 2026			30,000.00
CIBC FLEXIBLE GIC AT 2.154% MATURING OCTOBER 19, 2026			20,000.00

Yours in Christ, Nalini Badley, Treasurer

## Get Together

(Song by The Youngbloods)

Love is but a song we sing  
 Fear's the way we die  
 You can make the mountains ring  
 Or make the angels cry  
 Though the bird is on the wing  
 And you may not know why

Come on, people now  
 Smile on your brother  
 Everybody get together  
 Try to love one another right now

Some may come and some may go  
 He will surely pass  
 When the one that left us here  
 Returns for us at last  
 We are but a moment's sunlight  
 Fading in the grass

Come on, people now  
 Smile on your brother  
 Everybody get together  
 Try to love one another right now

If you hear the song I sing  
 You will understand, listen  
 You hold the key to love and fear  
 All in your trembling hand  
 Just one key unlocks them both  
 It's there at your command

Come on, people now  
 Smile on your brother  
 Everybody get together  
 Try to love one another right now

I said, come on, people now  
 Smile on your brother  
 Everybody get together  
 Try to love one another right now

Right now  
 Right now

Get Together lyrics © Ivan Mogull Music Corp., Irving Music Inc.